

Akul Datta

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Interested in AI or backend engineering opportunities

EDUCATION:

M.S. in Computer Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | Aug 2024 – May 2025

- Focus: AI, Computer Vision, Drone Robotics, Lead - UIUC Drone Racing Team
- Thesis: Occlusion-aware tracking for drones using neural methods | Advisor: Prof. Sayan Mitra

B.S. in Computer Science, , University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | Aug 2021 – May 2024

- Focus: AI | Selected Classes: Reinforcement Learning, System Programming, Applied ML, Deep Learning, Algorithms

EXPERIENCE:

Applied AI Engineer, Mercor, San Francisco - Aug 2025 - Present

- Published Mercor's [APEX-SWE](#), [APEX-v1](#), [ACE](#), [APEX-Agents](#) benchmarking AI agents on economically viable tasks
- Led development of RL environments for code, professional domains, BUA/CUA, Safety, and many more domains
- Ran internal posttraining experiments on data quality and led research on LLM search capabilities
- Scaled 4 different data verticals from 0 to \$XM/\$XXM in monthly revenue.

Contributor, ARC Prize, San Francisco - Jun 2025 - Jul 2025

- Built the [developer repository](#) with templates for ARC-AGI-3, worked with HuggingFace, Anthropic, LangChain
- Wrote documentation for the competition [here](#)

AI Intern, Endor Labs, Palo Alto - May 2024 - Aug 2024

- Developed a human-in-the-loop LLM Agent to autonomously manage and enhance AppSec workflows.
- Implemented a security vulnerability detection system for accurate pull request SAST analysis.

AI Researcher, University of Texas at Austin - May 2023 - Dec 2023

- Developed a synthetic dataset using MuJoCo to enhance out-of-distribution (OOD) object detection.
- Fine-tuned Stable Diffusion models, achieving state-of-the-art results for vision-based OOD tasks.
- Optimized large-scale GPU cluster training for model performance and efficiency.

Undergraduate Researcher, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - May 2023 - Dec 2023

- Designed and implemented a new SoTA Priority-Aware Load Balancer and Adaptive Concurrency Filter.
- Improved traffic handling by separating traffic into high and low priority using a new queue load balancer filter.

SWE Intern, Axiamatic, San Francisco - May 2022 - Aug 2022

- Built a scalable, fault-tolerant audit log system that handled 1000+ events/second and with 99.99% uptime.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:

- Won 3rd at the AGI House AI Hackathon in June 2023 for building an AI Agent for Healthcare
- Won 2nd (SIGPwny) in the CTF CSAW'21 competition
- Won 3rd out of 30 teams at the PalyHacks hackathon for an AI system for ambiance removal.
- Received an award from the California State Senate in 2021 for my leadership to drive a teen vaping ban
- Engineering Dean's List award for 2021 - 2023
- Founder [akul.ai](#): AI newsletter subscribed by researchers, VCs, and engineers

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Python, Java, C++, SQL, PyTorch, TensorFlow, Stable Diffusion, CUDA, LangGraph, MCP, OpenCV, AWS, Azure, GCP

PUBLICATIONS

- Acikgoz, E. C. et al. (2025) Can a Single Model Master Both Multi-turn Conversations and Tool Use? CoALM: A Unified Conversational Agentic Language Model. <https://openreview.net/pdf?id=IKyGvR8vrm> (ACL 2025 Main)
- Datta, A. et al. (2025) From Turns to Dialogues: Rethinking Task-Oriented Dialogue Evaluation by Combining Turn-Level Precision with Dialogue-Level Comparisons. <https://openreview.net/pdf?id=MTX6aMEcRj> (SIGDial 2025)
- Nakanoya, M. et al. (2021) Co-Design of Communication and Machine Inference for Cloud Robotics. Robotics: Science and Systems 2021. <https://www.roboticsproceedings.org/rss17/p046.pdf> (RSS 2021)